

Havard, William,

King Charles I

London 1793

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De Wilde pinx!

Audinet sculp

M^r. KEMBLE as KING CHARLES.

King: "by what law
have you erected this pretended Court?"

London. Printed for J. Ball, Brittils Library, Strand 3 April 1817.

KING CHARLES I.

A
TRAGEDY,

By MR. WILLIAM HAVARD.

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRES-ROYAL,

DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS.

By Permission of the Managers.

The Lines distinguished by inserted C's, are omitted in the Representation.

LONDON :

Printed for the Proprietors, under the Direction

JOHN BELL, British Library, STRAND,
Bookseller to His Royal Highness the PRINCE of WALES.

MDCCXCIII.



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Author's Copy

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TRAGEDY,

BY MR. WILLIAM HAVARD.

AS PERFORMED BY

THE ROYAL THEATRE, SWINLEY.

AT THE THEATRE, SWINLEY.

THEATRE, SWINLEY.

PRINTED AND SOLD BY

THE THEATRE, SWINLEY.

THE THEATRE, SWINLEY.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY

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TO HER GRACE THE
DUTCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH.

MADAM,

ADDRESSES, unauthorised by merit, are too frequent, and (what should be more surprising) often successful.

I would willingly approach in what I think the best shape, and choose rather to appear dressed in the opinion of the town, than my own.

I have been favoured with the general approbation, yet am still conscious of weakness, and know not where to sue more properly for protection, than to your Grace; believe this, madam, when I assure you, that I will always sacrifice my interest—to my sincerity.

I am an enemy to flattery; and, therefore, to be sure to be thoroughly disengaged from it, apply to a person who wants it not.

The greatness of mind I have constantly considered beyond that of the person; and when I say that you are a good woman, I think I say more than I should by stiling you a good dutchess. By confirming yourself the first, you have eminently proved yourself the latter. In this last opinion I apply myself to the world—not to your Grace, conscious that you are the only person that will not join in it.

I have little title to address your Grace, more than in the assurance that the smallest merit does not go unregarded by you. I confess myself obscure; but shall not think so, if your Grace looks upon me with the eye of favour: for, believe me, I have more ambition to merit your grace's esteem, than any other consideration that may be suggested; and shall ever think myself honoured in subscribing myself;

Your grace's most devoted,

Most obedient,

And most humble servant.

W. HAVARD.

PREFACE.

TO obviate any criticism that may justly fall upon the inaccuracy of this play, I judged it necessary to publish a few lines as an apology for the liberties I have taken with the history, and the faults that may appear to the judicious reader. And though the uncommon and general applause it has met with in the representation may seem to make it unnecessary, yet, without it, I could not acquit myself to my own judgment.

And first, as to the liberties I have taken with history, I hope I may be forgiven my introducing the queen, who was in France at the time I have laid the action of the play; but it being a story barren of female characters, I was induced to make her appear; and because I thought there would very naturally arise a pleasing distress at their parting, which I have introduced at the beginning of the fourth act.

Again, to heighten the distress in the last act, and to bring on one supposed to receive and convey the advice better, that the king sends by him to his eldest son, Charles, James appears, who at that juncture was in Holland. I have made an excuse for Cromwell's coming to the king, because I thought an interview between them was necessary, and would add to the spirit of the whole.

I am not conscious of any other liberties I have taken, except heightening the characters of Fairfax and his lady; which has added a warmth to the piece, and in some measure supplied the want of real matter to constitute five acts. The other persons in the drama are as strongly characterised, and as im-

partially, as I had ability, and the shortness of the time would permit.

There were some speeches omitted in the representation, which I have restored in print; and the reader may particularize them, if he thinks it worth while, by remarking commas prefixed to each line.

I must now do myself the pleasure to address those gentlemen of known judgment and great candour, whose corrections (though in so short a time for making them) have done me honour, and given reputation to the piece. Some I have not an opportunity of thanking personally; and therefore do it thus publicly, and declare, that nothing could equal the justness of their remarks, but their sincerity and humanity in delivering them.

I now throw the piece before the reader; and hope it will prove as agreeable an entertainment in the closet, as it seemed to be upon the stage.

KING CHARLES I.

THIS play is written by WILLIAM HAVARD, an actor for some years under GARRICK, and for whose final benefit that great man himself performed at Drury-lane Theatre.

His play is not written with an aim after the soaring sublimities of our early Drama, neither of course does it fall upon the turgid trash with which its imitators have generally satisfied corrupted taste. It is simply affecting, and placidly eloquent: the story does not lose its interest by the dress of the tragedian. Why it ceases to be a stock play, we know not; for though Lord CHESTERFIELD professed himself of opinion, that its catastrophe was *too horrible*, they who remember certain predictions and maxims of this conceited writer, may not incline to believe *that* the only reason he could have assigned.

Why a lesson like this play should not be perpetually presented to Englishmen, it is hard to say. The depravities of its rebels might warn them of the congenial hypocrisy of our own innovators—and we should be steeled against the wiles and impositions of modern regicides.

The writer of this preface has unhappily lived during an æt similar in its mode, superior in its horrors,

to that which this tragedy commemorates:—compared with the murder of CHARLES, that of LOUIS XVI. sinks into a savage assassination. That there was any difference between them may be ascribed to the religious habits of the Cromwell faction, and the utter prophanity of the modern republicans. The present ruffians, feeling the alliance between church and king, in France have destroyed both. We must blush to have given them the example of regal slaughter; but while we do blush for our predecessors, we can say, that they were *deluded* rather than *depraved*; and that, the excess of fanaticism moderated, there was a stamen of reasonable religion and steady understanding upon which to found a people affectionately loyal, yet proudly free.

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY A FRIEND.

IN former times, when wit was no offence,
And men submitted to be pleas'd with sense—
Then was the stage fair virtue's fav'rite school,
Scourge of the knave, and mirror of the fool.
Here oft the villain's conscious blush would rise,
And fools become, by viewing folly, wise.
Our bard, as then, despises song and dance,
The notes of Italy, and jigs of France:
With home distress he nobly hopes to move,
And fire each bosom with its country's love—
So much a Briton—that he scorns to roam
To foreign climes, to fetch his hero home—
Conscious that in these scenes is clearly shown
Britain can boast true heroes of her own.
Murder avow'd by law he boldly paints,
Heroes and patriots, hypocrites and saints;
Rebellion fighting for the public good,
And treason smiling in a monarch's blood.
Party, be dumb—in each pathetic scene,
Our muse, to-night, asserts an honest mean;

*Shows you a prince triumphant o'er his fate,
Glorious in death, as in misfortunes great;
By nature virtuous, tho' misled by slaves,
By tools of power, by sycophants and knaves.
When Charles submits to faction's deadly blow,
What loyal heart but shares the monarch's woe?
Nor less Maria's grief, ye gentle fair,
Claims the sad tribute of a tender tear.
From British scenes to-night we hope applause,
And Britons sure will aid a British cause.*

EXHIBIT

KING CHARLES

Mr.

King Charles - Mr. Wright

Duke of York -

Duke of Gloucester -

Bishop of London -

Duke of Richmond -

Masters of the Mint -

Oliver, Cromwell -

Fairfax -

Parliament -

Mr. Popham -

Mr. J. Wilson -

Colonel Tomlinson -

Queen -

Prince Elizabeth -

Lady Fairfax -

Stewart -

Stewart -

Stewart -

Stewart -

Stewart -

Stewart -

Stewart -

Stewart -

Stewart -

Stewart -

Stewart -

Stewart -

Stewart -

Stewart -

Stewart -

Dramatis Personae.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

King CHARLES	- - - - -	Mr. Wrighten.
Duke of YORK	- - - - -	_____
Duke of GLOUCESTER	- - - - -	_____
Bishop JUXON	- - - - -	Mr. Hull.
Duke of RICHMOND	- - - - -	Mr. Davies.
Marquis of LINDSEY	- - - - -	Mr. Thompson.
OLIVER CROMWELL	- - - - -	Mr. Aickin.
FAIRFAX	- - - - -	Mr. Lewis.
BRADSHAW	- - - - -	Mr. Lestrangle.
IRETON	- - - - -	Mr. Peile.
Colonel TOMLINSON	- - - - -	Mr. J. Wilson.

Women.

QUEEN	- - - - -	Mrs. Inchbald.
Princess ELIZABETH	- - - - -	_____
Lady FAIRFAX	- - - - -	Mrs. Lewis.

SCENE, partly at *St. James's*, and partly at *Whitehall*.



KING CHARLES I.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter Bishop Juxon and Duke of Richmond.

Juxon.

Good day, my lord, if, in a time like this,
Aught that is fortunate or good can happen ;
When desolation, wedded to despair,
Strides o'er the land, and marks her way with ruin :
Plenty is fled with justice ; rage and rapine
Have robb'd the widow'd matron, England, quite,
And left her now no dowry—but her tears.

Rich. Is it then certain that the lawless commons
Have form'd a court of justice (so they call it)
To bring the king to trial ?

Juxon. 'Tis most true ;
And though the lords refus'd to join the bill,
Yet they proceed without them. Lawless man !
Whither, at last, will thy impieties,
Thy daring insolence extend, when kings
Feel from a subject hand the scourge of pow'r ?

Where may an injur'd monarch hope for safety,
If he not find it in his people's hearts?

Rich. Oh, Naseby, Naseby, what a deadly stroke
Was thy ill-fated field to royalty!
On thy success depended monarchy;
The fate of rebels and the fate of kings
Hung on thy battle: but thou, faithless too,
Conspir'd with faction to o'erthrow us all,
And bring to sight these more than bloody times.

Juxon. To-morrow does the black tribunal sit;
When majesty is cited to appear
Before his tyrant subjects. Oh, preposterous!
Is 't not as bad as if these rebel hands
Should from their seats tear forth their ruling eyes,
Whose watch directs the body's use and safety?

Rich. It cannot be! 'Tis not in cruelty
To think of spilling royal blood. Mercy, sure,
And the pretended justice of their cause,
Will save them from the weight of so much guilt.

Juxon. What added guilt can that black bosom feel,
That has shook off allegiance to its king?
Whole seas of common and of noble blood
Will not suffice; the banquet must be crown'd,
And the brain heated with the blood of kings.
But see where Cromwell comes! upon his brow
Dissimulation stamp'd. If I can judge
By lineament and feature, that man's heart
Can both contrive and execute the worst
And the most daring actions yet conceiv'd.
Ambitious, bloody, resolute and wise,

He ne'er betrays his meaning till he acts,
 And ne'er looks out but with the eye of purpose.
 His head so cool, that it appears the top
 Of Alpine hill, clad with slow-wasting snow;
 His execution rapid as the force
 Of falling waters thund'ring down its base.
 Let us avoid him; for my conscious soul
 Fears him in wonder, and in praise condemns him.

[Exeunt.]

Enter CROMWELL.

Crom. Now through the maze of gloomy policy
 Has fire-eyed faction work'd her way to light,
 And deck'd ambition in the robe of power.
 Our fears in Charles's safety are remov'd,
 And but one blow remains to fix our state—
 The lopping off his head. No more the royal tree
 Shall, from legitimacy's root, presume
 To sprout forth tyrant branches. Commonwealths
 Own no hereditary right, unless our worth
 Shine equal to our birth. Wherefore, at once,
 Down with nobility—the commons rule!
 Avaunt prerogative and lineal title,
 And be the right superior merit.

Enter FAIRFAX.

Fair. I was to seek you, sir; some lab'ring doubts,
 Which, in th' uncertainty of these strange times,
 Call for the ray of clearness, make me press
 (Perhaps unseasonably) to your ear.

You will forgive th' impatience of a man
Who labours to be right—by your example.

Crom. Good Fairfax, spare me ; I am ill at words,
And utter badly where I mean respect :
Uncouth my answers are to truth and plainness ;
But to a compliment I ne'er could speak :
Yet could you look into my secret mind,
There my soul speaks to Fairfax as to one
Book'd in the fairest page of my esteem,
And written on my heart——But to your doubts.

Fair. You may remember, sir, when first my sword,
My fortune, life, and still, yet more—my honour,
Were all engag'd to fight the cause of justice ;
You thought, with me, the wrongs to be redress'd
Were the attempts upon the subjects' right,
The unregarded laws, and bold design
To stretch prerogative to boundless rule.
Design full fair and noble ! and th' event
Has crown'd our utmost wishes. England owns
No arbitrary sway ; the king's adherents
Are all dispers'd, or the remains so few,
They are not worth a fear ; the king himself
In close confinement. Now, let reason judge,
And blend discretion with success.
Let us be just—but let us stop at justice,
Nor by too hasty zeal o'ershoot the mark.
The Roman spirits, savage as they were,
When they determin'd to abolish kings,
Shed not the blood of Tarquin, but expell'd him ;

And shall we, owners of the christian law,
 Where mercy shines the foremost attribute,
 Be harder to appease? If not more mild,
 Let us not be more cruel than barbarians.
 Charles grasp'd, we own, at arbitrary sway,
 And would have been a tyrant—for which crime,
 The kingdoms he was born to we have seiz'd.
 But let us not despoil him of his life.
 Crowns, as the gift of men, men may resume;
 But life, the gift of Heaven, let Heaven dispose of.

Crom. Well have you weigh'd each growing circumstance,
 And held discretion in the nicest scale.
 Our fears remov'd, the subject right restor'd,
 What have we more to do, than to sit down,
 And each enjoy the vineyard of his toil?
 'Tis true—but yet some clamours are abroad;
 Petitions daily crowd the parliament,
 That loudly call for justice on the king,
 Imputing to his charge the guilt of murders,
 The desolation that has bared the land,
 And swept the crops of plenty from our fields.

Fair. What, shall the rabble judge—those servile curs,
 Who, as they eat in plenty, snarl sedition?
 Are these to be regarded?

Crom. You mistake me.
 'Tis not their outcries only; but, indeed,
 Those who see farther, and with better judgment,
 Fear, while he lives, his friends will never die;

But, by some foreign force or home design,
May some time shake the safety of the state.
Besides, they speak of an approv'd good maxim,
Remove the cause, and the effect will cease.
Oh, worthy Fairfax, thou art wise and valiant !
I have seen thee watch occasion, till advantage
Came smiling to thy arms, and crown'd thy patience :
And then, in fight, I have beheld thy sword
Outfly the pace of pestilential air,
And kill in multitudes.

Fair. Good sir, forbear.

Crom. Blush not to hear a truth, when Cromwell
speaks it :

My uncouth manner, ill at varnishing,
Beggars my will, and dresses praise uncomely.
Methinks I see thee in the rage of battle,
When Naseby's field confess'd thy victor arm,
And thy decision was the fate of kings.
Methinks I view thee in the bustling ranks,
Where danger was the nearest—(for you brought it)
Unhelm'd, encounter armies, and despise
The safety that the meanest soldier wore ;
And when a private man, with bold assertion,
Challeng'd a conquest which your arm had gain'd,
And was reprov'd ; methinks, I hear you say,
I have enough of glory, let him own it.

Fair. Whither does all this tend ? I pray forbear—
I never fought in hopes to have it told :
The man whose actions speak, expects no answer.

Crom. I do but barely tell thee what thou art,

And what the world may yet expect of Fairfax.
The diamond, merit, in the quarry hid,
Being unknown, unseen, attracts no eyes;
But, digg'd up by the lab'rer's curiosity,
And polish'd by the hand of gratitude,
It shines the ornament of human life.——
Think therefore what you are, and what this juncture:
The fairest lock of fortune is display'd,
And should be seiz'd on by the bold and worthy.

Fair. You talk in clouds above my purpose quite;
Which was but to enforce the cause of mercy,
And show how much is gain'd by stopping here;
To tell you what my conscience makes opinion,
And strengthen that opinion by your voice.

Crom. 'Tis true indeed—I had forgot myself;
But whither was I hurried in my zeal?
E'en I can descant on a pleasing theme:
Can you forgive me? though 'tis hard indeed;
Exalted virtue can with ease forgive
A calumny, but not a praise.——No more.
Heav'n can witness for me, with what true accord
My thoughts meet yours! how willing I would stop
The arm of violence, and make the law,
Stern as she is, assume a face of smiles.
The death of Charles is far from my design—
And yet the general outcry is for justice:
He has been much to blame, you know he has;
And (but I soften those unruly thoughts)
Were I to speak the dictates of my heart,

I could not find a punishment too great,
To fall upon the man, who should, like Charles,
Forget all right, and waste with lavish hand
The rich revenue of his people's love.

Fair. Dearly he suffers for misguided steps,
And knows that misery he meant to give;
He feels the bondage he design'd for us,
And by the want of freedom counts its value.

Crom. I pity him; and would the commons think
with me,
He were as safe as Cromwell; and, brave Fairfax,
We will endeavour it; and may that power,
Whose arm has fought the battle of our cause,
Incline them all to think like you—or me! [*Aside.*
I will about it. Yet remember, Fairfax,
The posture of these times: consider too,
How great your expectations ought to be:
Would Fairfax listen to the voice of Cromwell,
He should have nearer hopes than Charles's life:
Somewhat as great as your desert should crown you,
And make you partner of the highest honours. [*Exit.*

Fair. The highest honours! what can Cromwell
mean?

Acquit me, Heav'n! I fought not but for justice;
Rage fir'd me not, nor did ambition blind;
No party led me, and no interest bound;
My tie was conscience, and my cause was freedom.
When Fairfax listens to another call,
May his next stroke in battle be his last!

Enter IRETON.

Ire. Fairfax, I come, commission'd by the army,
To know your pleasure, if you think it meet
That they should march and quarter nearer London:
The public safety makes it requisite:
But they attend your orders ere they move.

Fair. The public safety! Say what new alarm,
What danger so awakes security,
That in her fright she thus lays hold of caution?

Ire. The safety of the commons, of yourself,
Of the high court of justice; who to-morrow
Against a tyrant proves the people's pow'r,
And brings offending majesty to justice:
This may excite his yet remaining friends,
Arm'd with despair, to some attempt of danger.
Who can be too secure? The man whose pillow
Prevention guards, may sleep in ease and safety.

Fair. To bring offending majesty to justice?

Ire. To the scaffold.

Fair. Ha!

Ire. Why do you start?

Fair. Your zeal too much transports you.
Ireton, farewell—and let me gain belief,
When I affirm this moral to thy ear:
Conscience than empire more content can bring,
And to be just, is to be more than king. [Exit.

Enter CROMWELL.

Crom. It is enough, good kinsman, let him go——

And yet I could well wish that he was ours—
But 'tis no matter—You began to warm,
And the good cause sat burning on thy cheek ;
Thou hast a well-turn'd tongue : but list thee, Ireton,
Hear my design (for still my heart is thine)—
The commons most are ours : the weeder's care
Has, from the garden of our enterprise,
Thrown out the rubbish that disgrac'd the soil,
And now our growth looks timely. This you saw,
When by my means a hundred doubted members
Were by the army seiz'd upon their entrance,
And since expell'd the house. Independency
Roots itself fast ; while presbytery force
Withers unseen. Would Fairfax had been ours !

Ire. I cannot see that his adherence to us
Could prosper much our cause, or his defection
Make us decline one moment from our purpose.

Crom. You mistake, Ireton : Fairfax stands the first
In interest with the very men I hate :
Therefore his joint endeavour would be found
The easiest means to bring my point to bear ;
Besides, he stands the fairest in the love
Of our whole party. Were we link'd together,
The army too were ours ; and their keen swords
Are powerful arguments. We shall thrive, however—
I have it—He shall hence, and on an expedition
Not the most just ; I know his squeamish honour,
If it surmise an action the least tainted,
Will throw up this employment : then 'tis mine :
And while I have dame fortune, she shall please me.

Ire. But the main turn of all your enterprise
Hangs on to-morrow, on the death of Charles:
'Tis from his scaffold only you must mount
To what your wishes aim at.

Crom. Fear not that.
I have to do with men, upon whose tempers
I know to work—Those who love piety,
I with the vehemence of prayer encounter,
And through the spirit practise on their passions.
Those who are crafty, I subdue with fraud,
And wile them to my purpose. To the bloody
I promise slaughters, deaths and executions:
Gold gains the covetous; and praise the proud.
There is another sort—but they are easy;
Your honest men, who never wear distrust;
For honesty's the jaundice of the mind,
That makes us think our neighbours like ourselves:
Let us together. Ireton, here it lies;
When fools believe, wise men are sure to rise.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter FAIRFAX.

Fairfax.

Oh, glory! how deceitful is thy view!
Such are thy charms, that o'er th' uncertain way
Of vice or faction, thou, to hide the danger,
Dost to the outward eye show fair appearance;

Which, when the follower steps on, down he sinks,
And then too late looks backward to the path
Of long neglected virtue.

Enter Lady FAIRFAX.

Lady Fair. My dearest Fairfax, call not this intrusion ;

Long has obedience combated with love,
Ere I would press upon your privacy :
If love has conquer'd, love may be forgiven.
The faults of tenderness (if faults they are)
E'en in offending wear the seal of pardon.
Why are you thus alone ; and why thus chang'd ?

Fair. My gentle lady, thoughts of deep concern,
That to the last recesses of my soul
Travel, with pain and penitence their guides,
At length have found the company they like ;
Busy reflection, moping melancholy,
And silence, the sure guard that keeps the door.

Lady Fair. I cannot blame your griefs, but come
to share them.

Indeed the cause is just : but, good my lord,
Let not despair take hold of that brave heart,
And boast a conquest which your foes ne'er could.
If (as I long have thought) the King be wrong'd,
Seek to redress, and not lament his fortunes.
I am a woman, not design'd for war ;
Yet could this hand (weak as you think its grasp),
Nerv'd by my heart's companion, resolution,
Display the royal banner in the field,

And shame the strength of manhood in this cause.
 Forgive this warmth: I ne'er till now, my lord,
 Gave you unask'd my thoughts; but I perceive
 Your heart is wounded, and I came to heal it;
 To offer you the balm of wholesome counsel,
 And temper my persuasion with my love.

Fair. Thou hast been more than I could hope in
 woman:

Thy beauty, thy least excellence. Thou appear'st
 Like a fair tree, the glory of the plain,
 The root thy honour, and the trunk thy friendship,
 (That stands the rudest blast of cold adversity)
 From whence branch out a thousand different boughs;
 Candour, humility, and angel truth,
 And every leaf a virtue. True, my love,
 While I conceiv'd our liberties in danger,
 I fought in their defence; but cannot bear
 This bold design upon the life of Charles.
 We took up arms to keep the law entire,
 Not to defend its open violation.

Lady Fair. I know thy honest heart, it hates a wrong:
 'Twas principle, not party, urg'd thee on
 To fight their cause: but Cromwell's specious wiles
 Pervert the justice of thy fair designs,
 And make thy virtue pander to his will.

Fair. Cromwell has art—but still I think him
 honest:

Yet in our late discourse his speech, methought,
 Appear'd disjointed; and he wav'd the theme
 I spoke about—the safety of the king——

At parting too, his words betray'd a purpose
Beyond the limits of a commonwealth ;
And talk'd of highest honours—but I hope
That my suspicions wrong him.

Lady Fair. No, my lord ;
Rather increase them ; keep them still alive
To arm against his black designs : discretion,
At the surmise of danger, wakes incessant ;
Nor drops the eye-lid till she sleeps in safety.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. The Duke of Richmond and a reverend bishop
Desire to see you.

Fair. Wait upon them hither ;
I guess at their desires, and would to Heaven
My pow'r could grant them what my wish confirms !

Lady Fair. And wherefore not, my lord ? The ar-
my yours,
Who can dispute your will ? Command them hither,
And be their threats the safety of the king.

Fair. Betray my trust ! Thou canst not mean such
baseness.

Should I (which much I doubt, for Cromwell's faction
Equals my pow'r, and more, among the soldiers)
Make them revolt, what would my conscience say ?
'T would be a mountain crime, a molehill good.
The whiteness of my fair design to Charles,
Spread o'er the visage of the means that gave it,
Like thinnest lawn upon an Æthiop face,
Would cover, not conceal the blackness. No, my love,
Virtue and baseness never meet together.

Enter Bishop Juxon and Duke of Richmond.

Juxon. A mournful errand, good my lord of Fairfax,
Makes us thus rude. My gentle lady, stay;—
Your voice will help the music of our plaint,
And swell the notes to moving melody:
Ill-fated Charles, deserted as he is,
Lives in your fair report (or fame has err'd);
Join in our concert, as you are next his heart,
You know to touch the string that sounds to pity.

Fair. My lords, I guess your purpose, and assure
you,
If my persuasion or my wish avail,
Charles feels no stroke till nature gives the blow.
Long may the fruit of health adorn the tree,
And ripen with his years in warmer times!

Rich. 'Tis truly spoke, my lord, and worthy Fairfax,
Whom I have still consider'd in this light;
As nobly just, and but at worst misled.

Juxon. How would this man adorn the royal cause,
Who makes rebellion wear the face of virtue!

[*Aside to Richmond.*
How I am pleas'd to find you feel this woe,
And strive for its prevention—let these speak—

[*Weeps.*
These eyes must else have known the dismal office
To see the widow's and the orphan's sorrows;
Complaint had been my language, care my bed,
And contemplation my uneasy pillow.
Now by your hopes of mercy plead this cause;

Know it a labour that will pay itself,
E'en in this world—and when you mount above,
You will behold it of so vast a value,
It will outweigh th' offences of your life.

Fair. Without this intercession, good my lord,
I had done all within my feeble power ;
Yet think what outcries din the parliament,
How many zealots call aloud for justice !
Then think what you may hope, and what not fear.

Lady Fair. No matter, Fairfax ; 'tis a virtuous cause,
And Heaven will bless the purpose with success.

Juxon. There mercy spoke, and in her softest voice :
And Heaven, I doubt not, signs the prophecy.

Enter CROMWELL.

Crom. Indeed ! does Fairfax keep such company ?
Shame on his pitying heart ! his soul 's unmann'd,
His resolution dwindled to a girl's :
Now, in the name of fight, is this the man
Whom armies fled from, and whom conquest lov'd ?
Behold him now crept to a private corner,
Counting out tears with priests and women. [*Aside.*

Fair. See
Where Cromwell comes ; I will once more assail him,
And be yourselves the witness of his answer.
Good Cromwell, welcome ! And let my petition,
Join'd with these lords, prevail upon your pity ;
Let Charles have life : is that so hard a boon ?
In lieu of three fair kingdoms, give him life.

Crom. Why this address to me? Am I the parliament?

'Tis they who justly call him to account,
And form this high tribunal.

Juxon. Justly, Cromwell!

Crom. Ay, good bishop, justly!
I cry your mercy. By the good old cause!
It is but gratitude in you to plead:
Episcopacy was the rock he split on;
And he has ventur'd fairly for your lawn:
How learnedly did he uphold your cause,
When Henderson inveigh'd against your mitres!
Did he not write full nobly? Say'st thou, bishop?

Juxon. His conscience prompted him to what he did;
His zeal for us can never be forgotten.

Crom. His conscience! you say true—his conscience
did it:

He would have stretch'd to arbitrary sway,
And swallow'd down our liberties and laws:
His conscience would have soon digested them.

Fair. Let us not into insult turn our power;
Good fortune is not wedded to our arms:
Conquest, like a young maiden with her lover,
If roughly treated, turns her smiles to frowns,
And hates where once she lov'd.

Crom. I stand corrected.
To me then you apply in Charles's favour,
And wait my answer, which is briefly thus:
I am but one, and (as the weaker must)
Flow in the current of majority:

D

My single voice, be it against or for,
Avails him little: if the rest incline
To think of mercy and of Charles together,
'Tis fairly done, and e'en to Cromwell's wish:
This is the sum of all I can deliver——
Fairfax, I have matter for your private ear.

Juxon. We humbly take our leaves.

Fair. My lords, farewell!

[*Exeunt Jux. Rich. and Lady Fair.*]

Crom. How can you waste your time on trash like
this?

Were Fairfax' honour to be doubted, this might make
The child suspicion grow to certainty;
But we are confident in you: your actions speak.
Yet, Fairfax, do not let thy noble eye
Catch the contagion of weak-judging pity,
And sympathise with beggars. To my purpose:
The council, at whose head your wisdom sits,
Weighing some depositions 'gainst the king,
Would have your judgment's sanction: they request
Your presence there; I bear their will with pleasure.

Fair. It is not needed, sir.

As to the purpose of their meeting, say,
If they incline to mercy, let their charge
Be weaker than it is; but if to rigour,
They have, I fear, too much of that already:
Let them (if friendly Fairfax may advise)
Judge with that candour they expect of Heaven.

Crom. You will not go then?

Fair. Say I cannot go.

My reason pleads against so bad a deed,

And inclination holds me ; nay, yet more,
A secret impulse strikes upon my soul,
Which, though I had the will, would yet detain me.

Crom. Folly and superstition ! Drive them hence ;
And, in exchange, wear honours and renown :
Of this I 've said—And, noble Fairfax, believe me,
That when the wind of promise and of hope
Stretches the canvass out of resolution,
The bark, design, flies swift before the gale,
And quickly anchors in good-fortune's bay ;
Then we unlade our freight of doubts and fears,
And barter them for happiness and glory. [*Exit.*

Fair. He who embarks himself in Cromwell's ship,
Outsails fair truth and ev'ry honest purpose.
'Tis now too plain—How could I doubt so long ?
My honesty has made me Cromwell's tool :
His arts have turn'd my virtue to a sword,
And now 'tis bared against me.
But say, shall Fairfax, whom in open field
An army could not conquer, fall a prey
To the ambitious prospects of one man ?
No, Fairfax—rouse up thy resentment's force,
And rescue thy renown from infamy. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A Chamber. King CHARLES *discovered reading.*

King. What art thou, life, so dearly lov'd by all ?—
What are thy charms, that thus the great desire thee,
And to retain thee part with pomp and titles ?

To buy thy presence, the gold-watching miser
Will pour his bags of mouldy treasure out,
And grow at once a prodigal. The wretch
Clad with disease and poverty's thin coat,
Yet holds thee fast, though painful company.
Oh, life! thou universal wish, what art thou?—
Thou'rt but a day—a few uneasy hours:
Thy morn is greeted by the flocks and herds,
And every bird that flatters with its note,
Salutes thy rising sun: thy noon approaching,
Then haste the flies and every creeping insect
To bask in thy meridian; that declining,
As quickly they depart, and leave thy evening
To mourn the absent ray: night at hand,
Then croaks the raven conscience, time mispent;
The owl despair screams hideous, and the bat
Confusion flutters up and down——
Life's but a lengthen'd day not worth the waking for.

Enter QUEEN.

My dearest queen!
I have been summing up the amount of life,
But found no value in it, till you came.

Queen. Do not perplex yourself with thoughts like
those:

Ill-fortune at the worst, returns to better;
At least we think so, as it grows familiar.

King. No, I was only arming for the worst.
I have try'd the temper of my inmost soul,
And find it ready now for all encounters:
Death cannot shake it.

Queen. Do not talk of death:
The apprehension shakes my tender heart;
Ages of love, I hope, are yet to come,
Ere that black hour arrives: such chilling thoughts
Disgrace the lodging of that noble breast.

King. What have I not to fear? thus close confin'd;
To-morrow forc'd to trial. Will those men,
Who insolently drag me to the bar,
Stop in the middle of their purpose? No.

I must prepare for all extremities:
And (be that Power ador'd, that lends me comfort)
I feel I am.—Oh, do not weep, my queen!
Rather rejoice with me, to find my thoughts
Outstretch the painful verge of human life,
And have no wish on earth—but thee! 'Tis there
Indeed I feel: peace and resignation
Had wander'd o'er the rooms of every thought,
To shut misfortune out, but left this door
Unclos'd, through which calamity
Has enter'd in thy shape to seize my heart.

Queen. Be more yourself, my lord; let majesty
Take root within thy heart, nor meanly bend
Before ill-fortune's blast.

King. Oh, doubt me not!
'Tis only on the side where you are plac'd,
That I can know a fear. For Charles's self,
Let fierce encounter with the sword of danger
Bring him to bloodiest proof; and if he shrinks,
Despise him. Here, I glory in my weakness,
He is no man whom tenderness not melts,

And love so soft as thine. Let us go in.
And if kind Heaven designs me longer stay
On this frail earth, I shall be only pleas'd,
Because I have thy presence here to crown me.
But if it destines my immediate end,
(Hard as it is, my queen, to part with thee)
I say, farewell, and to the blow resign,
That strikes me here—to make me more divine. [*Ex.*]

ACT III. SCENE I.

Enter CROMWELL and BRADSHAW.

Cromwell.

It shall be better, Bradshaw : do not think
Desert, though lowly plac'd, escapes our eye ;
To me it is as precious in the valley,
As glittering on the mountain's top :—
I praise myself that I have found thee out :
'Tis not my favour, Bradshaw, but thy worth
Brings thee to light ; thou dost not owe me aught.
Now, Bradshaw, art thou our high president.
Thou hast a heart well temper'd to the cause :
Thou look'st on monarchy in a true light,
And where the cause is just wilt shut out pity.
Pity !
The fool's forgiveness and the mother's tear :
The indiscretion of th' unpractis'd maid,
Who through that organ hears her lover's plaint,
And listens to her ruin.

Brad. My good sir,

Think not of Bradshaw thus. My soul is firm ;
 The melting eye and the relenting heart
 Ne'er wrong'd my resolution. As to kings,
 To monarchy, and to superior state,
 That I disclaim'd ; till your exalted merit
 Alter'd my purpose in my own despite,
 And, when I meant to level, rais'd you high.

Crom. Spoke in a hearty zeal for our good cause.
 That I have the same thoughts of thee, let this,
 Thy present weighty office, speak, which should,
 If Cromwell's nature bent to partiality,
 Have fallen upon my kinsman, Ireton ; one
 Of good regard, and hearty in the service :
 But Cromwell's heart points only to desert,
 The north of all his purpose. Thou art ours ;
 And though thy modesty at first declin'd
 To sit our head, and lead our counsels right,
 Yet I determin'd not to lose thy worth,
 If importunity could win it.

Brad. True, sir ;
 I own I thought myself unequal to it ;
 Nor am I yet convinc'd : yet what I want in merit,
 I will make out in rigour on the King,
 In justice to the people and to Heaven.

Crom. Bradshaw,
 Thou art the very sinew of our cause ;
 The spirit of design and warmth of zeal
 Glow in thy purpose. I adore that man,
 Who, once resolv'd, outflies e'en expedition.
 Thou art the glory of our brotherhood !
 And spare not to reproach, to taunt and blacken,

T' insult their party ; nay, the king himself ;
Mindful that all his dignity is lost,
And he, for monstrous crime, brought forth to justice.
Seek an occasion too to talk with Fairfax,
And urge to him the strong necessity
Of the king's death—Perhaps he may prove angry—
But do not thou regard it. The time presses ;
And thou hast liv'd too long to squander that.

Brad. Good sir, farewell ! my love would offer more,
But my haste wrongs it. [Exit.

Crom. Go to, Bradshaw.

Such are the tools with which the wise must work :
And yet he too is wise, and might cajole
A weaker than himself, and does.
He is my proper instrument
To operate on those below my notice.
Thus by comparison are all things known ;
And by such under-steps as him, and lower,
Do the ambitious mount to fame and honour.
Besides, I choose me those whom zeal inflames,
Who failing to convince you, will compel :
Such, prompted by enthusiasm's force,
And in predestination's armour cas'd,
Will to the mouth of danger plant their breasts,
And out-fight phrensy and despair. But lo !
Where Ireton comes !

Enter IRETON.

My trusty friend,
What look wears our design ?

Ire. Such as a bride,

The morning after bliss; she smiles upon us,
 And laughs at what she fear'd. Petitions call
 For justice on the king—Our faction thrives;
 Murmur increases to a public outcry.
 All are 'gainst Charles, save a few pitying hearts,
 Who melt with Fairfax, and incline to mercy.

Crom. 'Tis well. Send post unto the army, Ireton,
 And let those sums of money I have order'd
 Be secretly dispers'd among the soldiers;
 It will remind them of their promises:
 Gold is specific for the memory.
 O gold I wer 't not for thee, what great design,
 What bold ambition, that outstretches justice,
 Could have success? Thou buy'st our very prayers:
 Thou art the heart of opposition,
 And the tooth of faction. Wer 't not for thy aid,
 Success would vary like the uncertain wind,
 And honesty might prosper! Hie thee, Ireton;
 I must to the king; I have some bills to offer him,
 Which, for the life of Charles, Charles would not sign;
 And his refusal turns to our advantage.
 Thou shalt know more hereafter—Now dispatch.

Ire. Good sir, I fly. [*Exit.*

Crom. Ha! whom have we yonder?
 O! 'tis the wife of Fairfax: once as hearty,
 As zealous for the cause, as Cromwell's self,
 And wrought her lord to think so. Now, O woman,
 Such is thy varying nature, that the waves
 Are not more fluctuating than thy opinions,
 Nor sooner are displac'd. To her is owing
 The wayward pity of her vassal lord.

Oh, 'tis certain danger to have such a woman,
Who, when man leaves himself to toy with her,
Knows how to win, and practise on his weakness.
But let me think—All women may be won.
The dame of Ephesus, the Anne of Richard,
Show us a woman's grief and resolution.
Why may not she be wrought up to my purpose?
I can approach in what they like, in flattery.

Enter Lady FAIRFAX.

Lady Fair. Stay, worthy Cromwell, and attend my
prayer—

Hear me—and may thy answer be propitious,
As this kind hour that favours my address!
O may my falling tears, that plead for mercy,
Drop on thy heart, and melt it to compliance,
Nor disregard the suit because a woman's!
Cromwell is noble; and the noble soul
Grants the most free indulgence to the weak,
Because its generous nature pleads their cause.

Crom. Such is a woman's weakness, that she thinks
T' impose on us by what allures herself:
But I must turn this project upon her,
And fairly put it to an equal proof,
Who best dissembles, Cromwell—or a woman. [*Aside.*
Lady, I must esteem a compliment,
When from a tongue that seldom errs that way.
From what I know, and what I oft have heard,
You can dress praise like truth: that praise I mean,
Which, from our liking to the theme we speak of,
Swe'ls to extravagance (though still our thoughts)—

Such warmth is virtue's fault ; and such, I hope,
May be your kind excuse for praising me.

Lady Fair. Talk not of praise, good sir, your merit
shames it,
When from a woman's mouth.

Crom. Well turn'd again. [*Aside.*
O lady, were I but to speak my thoughts
Of you, and your brave lord, you would conclude
'Twere praise indeed—for virtue looks within
For her faults only, not for her perfections.
Hear some of those : you once espous'd our cause,
E'en with persuasion's warmth ; and well you sued.
We have not, sure, o'erlook'd desert so far,
To merit opposition !
The state is busy—but the time will come .
When her best office shall be pleasing you.

Lady Fair. You mock me, sir ; I do not wish that time,
Vain as you think my sex. I came to say——

Crom. E'en to that purpose, to the life of Charles.
It cannot be, the people cry for justice :
Would I could stop its course ! But, gentle lady,
Think it more wise to fly a falling pile,
Than strive to prop its ruin. Charles must die.

Lady Fair. O gracious Cromwell !——

Crom. Nay, but hear me on.
Why will you thus employ your eloquence,
Which our whole council would with liking hear,
To help impossibilities ? Good lady,
Rather employ it (and you know the way)
To teach your lord to value rising fortune,
And make his fame——

Lady Fair. As black as yours will be.
Shame on thy dark designs, and the whole cause,
If only such a deed can make it prosper!
Be the heart bloodless that conceives the act,
The tongue accurst that dares avow the purpose,
And the hand blasted that obeys the order!
May his life here be all the hell we think of,
Yet find a greater in the other world! [Exit.]

Crom. How wayward and perverse a thing is woman!
How much unlike the softness we expect,
When rage and trifles vex them! In the heat
And the full vigour of their first enjoyment,
Distrust succeeds their love; and he who pleases,
Is hunted by their jealousy to hate.—
Fairfax and Bradshaw earnest in dispute!
I will not interrupt them, but to Charles. [Exit.]

Enter FAIRFAX and BRADSHAW.

Brad. Why all this heat, my lord—because I said
That Charles deserves to die? Why, I repeat it:
And would you master this unmanly rage,
I might to reason prove it, but not phrensy.

Fair. Well, I am calm—speak out your bloody
purpose,
What hell devises, and what Bradshaw thinks.

Brad. Cast your eye backward then, and let us view
E'en the beginning of this Charles's reign:
In the first year a raging plague destroy'd us,
And was prophetic of our woes to come:
Did it not sweep whole multitudes away

Fast as the sword, which Charles has since unsheath'd ?

“ Did he not follow still his father's steps,

“ Retain his ministry, pursue his aims ?

“ Would he, tho' pray'd and threaten'd by the parliament,

“ Give up those men whose counsels had misled him ?

“ And is not that prince weak—to say no more——

“ Who from a general outcry guards the man

“ Whose bold ambition strikes at liberty,

“ At native freedom, and the subjects' right ?”

Fair. You but this moment blam'd my warmth,
And art thyself transported.

Brad. Grant I be :

'Tis in the cause that liberty approves,

And every honest Englishman must own it :

But to proceed—Those men he still held fast,

Or parted with them, as the heart drops blood :

“ Witness the Earl of Strafford :” tax'd the land

By grievous impositions ; levy'd war

Against the commons, and the kingdom's peace.

But I forget me that I speak to Fairfax,

Who has so often fought against his arms,

And taught success to know the cause of right.

Fair. I fought for reparation of our wrongs——
But cannot think that it consists in murder.
I would not have him die.

Brad. By the good cause,
It does portend some more than common change,
When generals plead for mercy ! Shame it hence,
And let your visage wear the glow of rage ;

Let Prynne's undaunted soul inform thy breast,
And drive weak pity thence.

Fair. I'll hear no more:
Thy servile tongue may spare its hireling office,
It roots my purpose firmer: in thy speech
I read design, tho' oratory's flowers
Strive to conceal the rancour of the heart.
O eloquence! thou violated fair,
How art thou woo'd, and won to either bed
Of right or wrong! O, when injustice folds thee,
Dost thou not curse thy charms for pleasing him,
And blush at conquest? But the juncture calls;
Nor will I leave one moment unemploy'd,
Till the king's safety be confirm'd. *[Exit.]*

Brad. 'Tis well.
I must to other folk, here time is lost.
This man has stepp'd into the stream of mischief,
Just like the boy, who tries the water's cold,
And shrinking pulls his foot to land: men, like me,
Plunge boldly in, and weather to their point. *[Exit.]*

SCENE II.

*The KING's Apartment. Enter KING and Bishop
JUXON.*

Juxon. Why does your highness seem so lost in
thought?
Consider not so deeply, good my lord.

King. The purport of my dream this afternoon

Has set this visage on. I'll tell thee, Juxon——
 Finding my spirits faint, I laid me down,
 And courted sleep to ease me; to my wish
 It quickly seiz'd my eye-lids, and methought
 (So fancy painted) former times return'd,
 Grandeur encircled me, and regal state;
 My people's love flew round about my throne,
 On acclamation's wing; 't was glory all,
 And such a reign as Charles has pray'd for. Homage,
 The bond of friendship, and the oath of trust,
 Were all before me: straight the pleasing scene,
 Quick as the fearful eye can wink, was chang'd;
 And in its room, a vast and dreary plain,
 Comfortless, wild, without inhabitant,
 Stretch'd out a dismal length that tir'd the eye;
 I was about to go—when kind adversity
 Pull'd me behind, and, as I turn'd around,
 Show'd me where innocence stood weeping by;
 He whisper'd in my ear, that she alone
 Of all my boasting friends had staid with me.
 The thought struck deep; I wak'd, and, good my lord,
 I found my weeping queen within my arms.

Enter CROMWELL.

Crom. If I disturb you, sir, I ask your pardon:
 Necessity will sometimes be importunate,
 And outgo compliment.

King. Your business, sir?

Crom. Know then, whatever may be thought of
 Cromwell,

He pays this visit to approve his love,
His fair design and honesty of heart
To Charles—Solicitous to bring you good,
Behold two bills, in tenor much the same
With those before presented ; I presume,
The eye in danger more distinctly sees,
Freed from security's thick film : these sign'd,
Rigour may break her sword, and concord join us.

King. Can the low peasant mount his thoughts with
kings ?

The servile judge of all men by themselves.
But know, mistaken man, the noble mind
Rises above distress ; and terms, perhaps,
Which in the day of power I might accept,
Must be refus'd in this : but these can never.
There is no good that equals the exchange
Of peaceful thoughts and an untainted mind.

Crom. Where were those thoughts in Charles's former days,

When to despotic sway you stretch'd your view,
And would have pull'd up laws ? when to that end
You so caress'd your fav'rite Buckingham,
The tool of your designs ? What were your thoughts
When, from the fair impeachment of the public,
You shelter'd up that monster minister,
And hid him in the bosom of your fondness ?

Juxon. Insolent Cromwell ! know to whom thou
speak'st ;

Think what a distance Heaven has set between you ;
And be your words as humble as your state.

Crom. Distant! good bishop! but I cry you mercy;
 “ For thus the clergy will still argue on,
 “ Deny from pique, assert from prejudice;
 “ Show us the lesson, seldom the example,
 “ And preach up laws which they will ne’er obey.”
 But thou art trash below the note of Cromwell:
 To thee I speak, protector of black Buckingham!
 “ What must that monarch be, who lets one man
 “ Ingross the offices of place and power,
 “ Who, with the purloin’d money of the state,
 “ Buys popularity, and whose careless eye
 “ Sees our fair trade destroy’d by corsair force,
 “ And pirate violence; who merchandises trusts,
 “ And highest posts—and whose unbounded power
 “ Does on his worthless kindred lavish titles?”

King. Were I the person that thy malice speaks,
 I should deserve this treatment. Thy base charge
 Strikes at my honesty as king and man,
 And forces me to answer. Well I know
 That for my actions here, to Heaven alone
 I stand accountable: yet stooping thus,
 (Low as to thee) I thus avow my justice;
 Have I not still maintain’d the subjects’ rights,
 Preserv’d religion pure; nay, struggled for it,
 E’en to this hour, the witness of thy insolence?
 What would your faction have? If monarchy,
 Must I not govern by the acts of state?
 I am a monarch else without a council.
 Would you reduce the state to anarchy?
 You are a council then without a power.

Crom. You feel our power (as slightly as you term it).

King. Such as a robber's, by surprise and force:
Where is your right from Heaven?

Crom. Power!

The right of nature and the free-born man.

King. Leave me.

Crom. You speak as if you still were king.

King. If not, what am I then?

Crom. Charles Stuart, nothing more.

King. Well may the servile herd insult and threaten,
When they behold the lion in the toils.

Crom. You may complain as much as suits your will,
You've still that comfort left—So fare you well.

[*Exit.*

Juxon. Thus is good fortune treated by the base:
O, did she know how much they shame her favours,
She would confer them only on the great!
Be cheerful, sir; he is not worth a thought.

King. O Juxon! think what majesty must feel,
Who bears an insult from a subject tongue!
But let him hence—I am compos'd again,
And for the worst prepar'd. All-gracious Heaven!
You gave me power, and you may take it back;
You gave me life, and may reclaim the gift;
That as you please—But spare this luckless land,
And save it from misfortune's rugged hand!
My every wish is for its joys' increase,
And my last prayer shall be my people's peace.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Enter King CHARLES, the QUEEN, and Lady FAIRFAX.

Queen.

Is it like love thus to persuade me hence ?
Is it like love, alas! in me to go ?
Can she be faithful to her luckless lord,
Who will be absent in affliction's hour ?
Is it not then the lenient hand of love
Proves its best office ? Then the virtuous wife
Shines in the full meridian of her truth,
And claims her part of sorrow : O, my lord,
Have I been so unthrifty of thy joy,
That you deny me to partake your woe ?

King. No, my best queen—you wrong my heart's
design.

'Tis not my wish advises—but my fear,
My fears for thee, the tenderest part of Charles :
When thou art safe beyond their barbarous power,
I cannot feel misfortune.

Queen. But I shall,
More than to share e'en death with thee :—
My sorrows will be doubled if I go :—
The pangs of separation must be great,
And my conceit of what my Charles may feel
Exceed reality.—O let me stay—
I was prepar'd to suffer all things with you,

But not the shock of parting.

Lady Fair. Welcome, tears!

Who that have virtue can behold this scene,

And not be actors in it?

King. Now 'tis past.

I would have sooner spoke, but powerful nature

First claim'd my tears, ere she would lend me words:

It must not be, my love; thy prayer to stay

(The growing proof of thy eternal love)

Argues against thee to my tender heart,

And forces thee away: this worthy lady

Has found the means, and made the generous offer,

Her care prepares your flight: the present hour,

That forces me before their black tribunal,

Will hold all eyes regardless of your steps,

And make security thy guide:—farewell!

Till we shall meet again, thy dear idea

Shall in my waking fancy still revive,

And fill up every dream.

Queen. My dearest lord,

Can you so easily pronounce—farewell,

When that farewell may be perhaps—for ever?

O can you leave me thus?—

Methinks our parting should affect the world,

And nature sympathise with griefs like ours—

O let me stay, at least, till this black day

Be past, that I may know the worst!

To be in doubt is worse than to be certain;

My apprehension will increase my woe,

And bring the blackest scenes of death before me.

King. No more, my queen! that were to risk thy
safety,
And make me more unhappy in thy danger:
Farewell.

Queen. O, yet a little longer!
Each moment now is worth an age before.
Thou never-resting time! 'tis only now
I count thy value. O, my dearest lord!
Who could believe, when first we met in love,
That we should know a parting worse than death?
Do not go yet.

King. Heaven knows I would not go——
But dire necessity must be obey'd:
And see where he appears in his worst form.
Keep in thy tears, my love, lest he suspect——
And teach thy heart to say farewell at once.

Enter Colonel TOMLINSON.

Tom. My lord, I have orders to attend your
Majesty to Westminster.

King. A moment spent in private,
And I am ready. [Exit Toml.
Do not droop, my queen!
Exert the strongest vigour of thy soul,
Call up thy piety, thy awful virtue,
Thy resolution, and thy sex's pride,
And take their friendly counsel; they will soon
Determine you to think of Charles, as one
Beyond the power of faction in this world,
And ready for another—Fare thee well;

I have this compliment to pay thy worth,
That now I leave thee with more tender thoughts
Than first I met thy love—this tear—adieu!
Now, sir, lead on. [To Col. Toml. *entering*.

Queen. O stay, my dearest lord!

[*Exeunt King and Col. Toml.*
Let me assure thee of my faith and love——
Witness thou awful Ruler of the world,
How much I feel in parting—how my heart
Labours to break to prove its constancy;
How my affection still has call'd thee dear;
Never unkind, till in this parting moment.
What do I say? Alas! my Charles is gone——
Fancy presented him before my eyes,
And my tears wrong'd my sight—he's gone for ever.

Lady Fair. Good madam, think your safety calls
upon you;

Your very sorrows are not here secure;
Though you neglect your own, yet think his ease,
The ease of Charles, depends upon your flight;
I have provided every proper means,
They wait your will.——

Queen. Kind lady, I will go——
But oh, be just to nature, and to pity,
And own 'tis hard—I thank your friendly tears,
They speak my meaning—but I weary you.——
The wretch who feels misfortunes will complain,
And I have wondrous reason—O, my Charles!
Since I must go, may every adverse star
Dart on my wand'ring head, and leave thy sky

Deck'd with propitious planets only!—May thy life,
Clear as thy innocence, adorn the world,
And be the theme of wonder!—O my heart! [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Marquis of LINDSEY, *meeting the* Duke of
RICHMOND.

Lind. Saw you the king pass by?

Rich. I did, my lord:

As to his coronation, not his trial:
Such was his look—such awful majesty
Beam'd out on every side, and struck the gazer.
No mark of sorrow furrow'd up his face,
Nor stopp'd his smiles to his saluting friends;
Clear as his conscience was his visage seen,
The emblem of his heart. As I approach'd,
Richmond, said he, commend me to my friends;
Say, though my power is gone, my wishes reach them,
And every prayer that rises, breathes their welfare.
'Tis not in faction to subdue the spirit,
Or break the noble mind: his speaking eyes
Repeated his commands, and pierc'd my heart:
E'en the base rabble—licens'd to insult,
Struck with the dignity of kingly awe,
Forgot their hire, and rose from praise to wonder.

Lind. Will you not follow, sir? 't were worth re-
mark,

How he deports himself.

Rich. O fear not Charles:

Let him encounter with a host of kings,
And he shall stand the shock without a terror:
Will he then shrink beneath a subject-brow,

Though wrinkled with rebellion?—No, good Lindsey,
The lion cannot lose his kingly nature,
The sun its heat, nor Charles his noble firmness;
Perhaps, indeed, his generous heart may feel,
Not for himself, but for his tyrant judges;
He may lament deprav'd humanity,
And blush to be mistaken in his people.
See, what a mournful visage Fairfax wears,
The sun of pleantry eclips'd by thought:
Now judgment combats inadvertency,
And makes him curse success—but thus 'tis ever
When courage wildly starts out by itself,
Nor asks consideration's friendly aid;
Confusion joins him; then he wanders through
The thicket doubt, the maze perplexity,
And finds at last repentance.

Enter FAIRFAX.

Fair. Now the scene
Of bloodiest purpose is on foot, and acting;
Now murder mounts the bench, array'd like justice,
And points the sword at Charles—ill-fated man!
Ha! who are those? the friends of Cromwell's faction?
No, they are with their huntsmen on the scent
Of royal blood, uncoupled for destruction.—
If sorrow blinds me not—the duke of Richmond.

Rich. Good sir, how fare you?

Fair. Wondrous ill, my lord.
Could I but tell you what I feel—yet live,
You would conclude me danger-proof—O, sir!

Reflection shows me the vast tract I 've pass'd,
And stern impossibility denies
One step return—yet (be my witness Heav'n)
This dreadful day was never in my wish.

Rich. We do not think it was. But, gentle lord,
Think of some means to ward this fatal blow,
And save the king. Would you but go, my lord,
Your struggle might——

Fair. Alas! what can I do?
Was ever army routed by one man?
I have an army there to combat with.
Should I go there in order for prevention,
Failing, my presence would be made consent,
And I still more unhappy. O the change!
This is the curse of independent power,
For presbytery never meant it. Yet, my lords,
You shall not say, that Fairfax only talks;
He will approve his honesty by deeds;
Somewhat he will attempt to save his honour,
And clear it to the view of future times.

Rich. We do not doubt your will, nor yet your
power.

My lord, farewell. [*Exeunt Rich. and Lind.*]

Fair. My power!——say, what is power?
The vain extent of title and of land;
The barbarous impulse to the insulting wretch,
To use his fellow-creature like a slave;
The woman's idol, and the man's misfortune,
As it too often robs him of humanity.
This is the worst degree——behold the best,

And now 'tis lovely ; the redress of wrongs,
Hunger's repast, and the large draught of thirst,
The poor man's riches, and the rich man's wealth,
When thus apply'd—The means to stop the death,
The death of Charles——This is my wish for power.

[Exit.]

SCENE II.

Draws, and discovers the High-Court. KING, BRAD-
SHAW, CROMWELL, IRETON, &c.

King. Sir, were my person all the danger here,
I should not think it worth the pain of speech :
Your charge 'gainst me is of the smallest force ;
But 'tis my people's liberties I prize,
At which through me you strike : impeachments run
In the king's name, and therefore cannot lie
Against the king himself ; what earthly power
Can justly call me to account ? By what law
Have you erected this pretended court ?——
The house of commons ?—Say, is that alone
A court of judicature ? Where are the lords
To lend their aid ? the king to sit supreme,
And pass the nation's laws ? Are these your means
To bring the king to meet his parliament ?
To force him hither like a criminal ?
I lately did require, and press'd it warmly,
Stoop'd almost to entreaty, to be heard
Before both houses in the Painted-chamber ;

I told you what I had to offer there
 Concern'd the kingdom's safety more than mine :
 I was refus'd——Is this your boasted justice ?
 Consider of it yet—and hear your king :
 If you do not, remember where it lies,
 The weight of this day's guilt; if you refuse—
 Do as you please——I have no more to say.

Brad. The court has something then to say to you,
 Which, though it may not please you, must be spoke :
 You have been charg'd with tyranny and murder,
 With levying arms against the commonwealth,
 And joining in rebellion 'gainst the people.

King. Sir, give me leave to speak, ere sentence
 passes,
 Against those imputations——

Brad. By your favour,
 Your time is past, and sentence now approaching.

King. Am I not to be heard ?

Brad. 'Tis now too late ;
 You have disown'd us for a court of justice ;
 We have too long been trifled with already,
 And must proceed—Attend your sentence, sir :
 The commons, in behalf of the whole people,
 Have constituted this high-court of justice,
 To try Charles Stuart, lately king of England.
 He has thrice heard his charge, and thrice deny'd
 The power and jurisdiction of the court ;
 For which contempt, and proof of his high crimes,
 It does pronounce him tyrant, traitor, murderer,

Adjudging him to death, by severing
His head and body——This is the joint act,
The sentence, judgment, and the resolution
Of the whole court.

[The whole Court rises in token of their assent.]

King. Will you hear me, sir?

Brad. Not after sentence.

King. No, sir?

Brad. It is too late. Withdraw your prisoner.

“*King.* May I not speak?—I may, sir, after sentence.

“Your favour, sir, I may, sir, after sentence.

“*Brad.* Adjourn the court.”

[The King is brought forward; the Scene closes.]

King. Deny'd to speak!—Why have I lived to this?
When I had power, the meanest of my subjects,
Not heard by me, would straight arraign my justice,
And brand me with the hated name of tyrant.
Will future ages, looking back to this,
Credit the record? They will rather deem it
The black invective of a partial pen,
And curse his memory that libell'd England.
Sir, I am ready to attend your will,
Do your worst office; if 'tis your commission,
Then lead me down this instant to the block;
'Twill be a joyful hearing; for, believe me,
I would not live in longer fellowship
With men, whom my best thoughts must call ungrate-
ful.

Tom. Sir, my commands are to attend you back;
I have no more in charge.

King. I follow you.

[*As he goes out, Fairfax enters.*]

Fair. Sir, let me trespass for a word or two,
Ere you remove your prisoner. [To Tomlinson.]

Tom. I obey, sir.

King. Your pleasure, sir? If you come here t'insult,
Spare not the taunt, nor the opprobrious smile:
I have to-day already borne so much,
That an addition will be scarcely felt.

Fair. Wrong me not so; I bear a fairer purpose:
My heart, detesting this accursed day,
Comes to approve its honesty to Charles:
If I have often fought against thy arms,
My conscience dictated, and not my hate:
Acquit me to thyself of this last act,
And judge the former as you please.

King. Good Fairfax,
The present times are liable to error,
I am a fatal instance; then forgive me.
I had forgot how lately I had cause
To think you now no enemy to Charles;
But sorrow forc'd down her lethargic draught,
Which had clos'd up the eye of memory.

Fair. Ill-fated prince! how does thy firmness shine,
And make affliction glorious! Oh, 'tis thus
The truly great exert their resolution,

And make calamity a virtue. Cromwell now
Loses the barb'rous joy of his design,
To see misfortune's arrow fail to pierce thee.

King. Believe me, Fairfax, 'tis not innate firmness,
The dame morality, the Stoic patience,
That furnish true serenity of mind:

I had try'd all these helps, but prov'd them weak,
And found the best philosophy in virtue.

Can the fond teacher's lesson, conn'd by rote,
Change the dark lodging of the murderer's breast
To the sun-lighted rooms of innocence? Oh, no!

As to the agents of my present fate,
I look upon them with the eye of thanks;
Who from this life of sorrow wing my parting,
And send me sooner to an happier throne.

Fair. Such resignation wears the noble mind,
And triumphs over death: but, gentle Charles I
Think not of death so soon, live long and happy.
Fairfax will try his utmost stretch of power,
But you shall live, though this black day has happen'd;
Persuasion, prayer, and force, shall all be us'd,
To make my promise good.

King. Good Fairfax, hear me;
Nor indiscreetly throw thyself away,
To save the man whose wishes are to die.
I had remov'd my thoughts from earth, and now
'T will be such pain to call them back again——
Life is not worth the trouble: yet I thank thee.

Fair. This was but half my purpose: hear me on—

If, in the hurry of intemp'rate zeal,
I have outgone the justice of the cause,
And, erring in judgment, fought in wrong,
Let this entreaty win thee to a pardon.

King. If to have my forgiveness makes thee clear,
Thou art as white as virtue.

Fair. Glorious Charles I
But I will hasten to preserve his life,
And make my gratitude my thanks; farewell!
It is the common interest of mankind
To let him live, to shine out an example.

King. Who dresses in good fortune's gorgeous
ermine,
Looks not so comely to a virtuous eye,
As he who clothes him in repentant black.
I tire your patience. Come, sir, lead the way;
Lighter than fancy does my bosom feel,
My thoughts are mercy, and my quiet conscience
Tranquillity's still calm: no anxious fear
Beats in my pulse, or ruffles me with care:
If the bare hope of immortality
Knows peace like this, what must the full enjoyments
be? [Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE I.

Enter FAIRFAX.

Fairfax.

WHY did I conquer—to repent of conquest?
Who, though I fought for liberty alone,
Will yet acquit me of the guilt that follows?
Will future ages, when they read my page,
(Though Charles himself absolves me of the deed)
Spare me the name of regicide? Oh, no!
I shall be blacken'd with my party's crimes,
And damn'd with my full share, though innocent.
In vain then 'gainst oppression have I warr'd,
In vain for liberty uprear'd the sword;
Posterity's black curse shall brand my name,
And make me live in infamy for ever.
Now, valour, break thy sword! thy standard, victory!
Furl up thy ensigns, bold hostility,
And sink into inaction; since, alas!
One tainted heart, or one ambitious brain,
Can turn the current of the noblest purpose,
And spoil the trophies of an age's war.
But see where, to my wish, stern Cromwell comes;
Now urge him strongly for the life of Charles,
And, if entreaty fails, avow thy purpose.

Enter CROMWELL.

Crom. Fairfax in thought! My noble lord, good day.

Fair. To make it good, let Cromwell grant my prayer,

So mercy and the sun shall shine together.

Crom. Still on this paltry subject! Fairfax, why, Why will you wrong entreaty by this cause? Fairfax is wise, and should not ask of Cromwell To grant what justice stops; yours are not years When childhood prattles, or when dotage mopes:— Pardon the expression.

Fair. I forgive you all, All you can think, but rigour to the king.

Crom. Pr'ythee no more: this mercy that you pray for, As ill becomes the tongue, as my severity; Nay, worse. Would you obstruct the law In its due office; nor permit the axe To fall upon offenders, such as Charles? Would you see tyranny again arise, And spread in its foundation? Let us then Seize on our general, liberty, who still Has in the front of battle fought our cause, And led us on to conquest; let us bind him In the strong chains of rough prerogative, And throw him helpless at the feet of Charles: He will absolve us then, and praise our folly.

Fair. This is a sophistry too weak for reason:
You would excuse the guilt of Charles's death,
By showing me the opposite extreme;
But can you find no mean, no middle course,
Steering between the danger of the last,
And horror of the first? I know you can.

Crom. It is not to be done: would Fairfax now,
When he has labour'd up the steep ascent,
And wasted time and spirits; would he now,
When but one step exalts him to the summit,
Where to his eye the fair horizon stretches,
And every prospect greatness can command;
Would he now stop, let go his fearful hold,
And tumble from the height?

Fair. I aim at none;
Damn'd be all greatness that depraves the heart,
Or calls one blush from honesty!—No more——
I shall grow warm to be thus trifled with:
Think better, Cromwell——I have given my promise
That Charles shall live.

Crom. A promise may be broke;
Nay, start not at it——'Tis an hourly practice;
The trader breaks it—yet is counted honest;
The courtier keeps it not—yet keeps his honour;
Husband and wife in marriage promise much,
Yet follow sep'rate pleasures, and are—virtuous.
The churchmen promise too, but wisely, they
To a long payment stretch the crafty bill,
And draw upon futurity. A promise!

'Tis the wise man's freedom, and the fool's restraint;
 "It is the ship in which the knave embarks,
 "Who rigs it with the tackle of his conscience,
 "And sails with every wind: regard it not."

Fair. Can Cromwell think so basely as he speaks?
 It is impossible; he does but try
 How well fair speech becomes a vicious cause,
 But, I hope, scorns it in the richest dress.
 Yet hear me on—it is our interest speaks,
 And bids us spare his life: while that continues,
 No other title can annoy our cause,
 And him we have secure; but grant him dead,
 Another claim starts up, another king,
 Out of our reach—This bloody deed perhaps
 May rouse the princes of the continent
 (Who think their persons struck at in this blow)
 To shake the very safety of our cause.

Crom. When you consult our int'rest speak with
 freedom;
 It is the turn and point of all design.
 But take this answer, Fairfax, in return;
 Britain, the queen of isles, our fair possession,
 Secur'd by nature, laughs at foreign force;
 Her ships her bulwark, and the sea her dike,
 Sees plenty in her lap, and braves the world.
 Be therefore satisfy'd; for Charles must die.

Fair. Wilt thou be heard, though at thy utmost
 need,
 Who now art deaf to mercy and to prayer?

Oh, curs'd ambition, thou devouring bird,
How dost thou from the field of honesty
Pick every grain of profit and delight,
And mock the reaper, virtue ! Bloody man !
Know that I still have power, have still the means
To make that certain which I stoop to ask ;
And fix myself against thy black design,
And tell thee, dauntless, that he shall not die.

Crom. Will Fairfax turn a rebel to the cause,
And shame his glories ?

Fair. I abjure the name ;
I know no rebel on the side of virtue.
This I am sure of, he that acts unjustly,
Is the worst rebel to himself ; and though now
Ambition's trumpet and the drum of power
May drown the sound, yet conscience will, one day,
Speak loudly to him, and repeat that name.

Crom. You talk as 't were a murder, not a justice.
Have we not brought him to an open trial ?
Does not the general cry pronounce his death ?
Come, Fairfax dares not——

Fair. By yon heaven, I will——
I know thee resolute ; but so is Fairfax.
You see my purpose, and shall find I dare. [Going

Crom. Fairfax, yet stay. I would extend my power
To its full stretch, to satisfy your wish ;
Yet would not have you think that I should grant
That to your threats, which I deny'd your prayer—
Judge not so meanly of yourself and me.

Be calm, and hear me——What is human nature,
When the intemperate heat of passion blinds
The eye of reason, and commits her guidance
To headlong rashness? He directs her steps
Wide of success to error's pathless way,
And disappointments wild; yet such we are,
So frail our being, that our judgment reaches
Scarce farther than our sight——Let us retire,
And, in this great affair, entreat his aid,
Who only can direct to certainty.

There is I know not what of good presage,
That dawns within, and lights to happy issue.

Fair. If Heaven and you consider it alike,
It must be happy.

Crom. An hour or two of pray'r
Will pull down favour upon Charles and us.

Fair. I am contented; but am still resolv'd
That Charles shall live——I shall expect your answer
With the impatience of desiring lovers,
Who swell a moment's absence to an age. [Exit.

Crom. This was a danger quite beyond my view,
Which only this expedient could prevent.
Fairfax is weak in judgment; but so brave,
That, set determination by his side,
And he ascends the mountain top of peril.
Now time is gain'd to ward against his power,
Which must be quickly thought on—to my wish—

Enter IRETON.

Ire. I but this instant met the general, Fairfax,

Who told me his entreaty had prevail'd
To save the life of Charles——'Tis more than wonder——

Crom. Ireton, thy presence never was more timely.
I would disclose ; but now each moment's loss
Is more than the neglect of future years.
Hie thee in person to St. James's, Ireton,
And warn the officer, whose charge leads forth
The king to execution, to be sudden :
Let him be more than punctual to the time ;
If his respect to us forerun his warrant,
It shall win greatness for him ; so inform him——
That done, repair o' th' instant to the army,
And see a chosen party march directly,
(Such as can well be trusted) post them, Ireton,
Around the scaffold——My best kinsman, fly.

[*Exit Ireton.*

Why, now, I think I have secur'd my point ;
I set out in the current of the tide,
And not one wind that blows around the compass,
But drives me to success. Ambition, now,
Soars to its darling height, and, eagle-like,
Looks at the sun of power, enjoys its blaze,
And grows familiar with the brightness ; now I see
Dominion nigh ; superiority
Beckons and points me to the chair of state ;
There grandeur robes me. Now let Cromwell boast
That he has reft the crown from Charles's brow,
To make it blaze more awful on his own. [Exit.

SCENE II.

The KING discovered on a Couch.

King. Kind sleep, farewell!
Thou hast been loyal in the nightly care,
And always smooth'd my pillow : at our parting,
As to a faithful friend, I say, farewell,
And thank thee for thy service. Here's another,

Enter Bishop Juxon.

Whose better care gives quiet to the mind ;
Who gives us the rich opiate of content,
That makes us sleep in hope, and wake to mercy ;
Him too, the bankrupt Charles can only pay
As he has done the former ; no return,
But the poor gratitude of thanks, warm from the heart.
Say, my good lord, have you so soften'd rigour,
That I may see my children ere I die ?

Juxon. It is permitted, sir ; they wait without ;
I would not let them enter, till I knew
You were prepar'd, and ready for the interview.

[Exit Juxon.]

King. Good Juxon, lead them hither. Now the
father,
Spite of my firmness, steals into my eye,
And melts my manhood. Heart, thou hast no temper
Proof against nature, speaking in a child !

Enter Bishop JUXON, JAMES, GLO'STER, and
ELIZABETH.

James. My royal father !

King. Good Juxon, make them rise ;
For if I look that way I shall kneel too,
And join with them in tears. A chair, good Juxon.

[*Juxon brings a chair forward, and raises the children.*
Come hither, James ; nay, do not weep, my boy ;
Keep thy eyes bright to look on better times.

James. I will command my nature if I can,
And stop these tears of sorrow ; for, indeed,
They drown my sight ; and I would view thee well,
Copy my royal father in his death,
And be the son of his heroic virtues.

King. Thou art the child of duty : hear me, James,
And lay up this last lesson in thy heart :
When I am dead, look on thy brother Charles
Not as thy brother only, but thy king ;
Pay him fraternal love, and subject duty ;
Nor let ambition, or the thirst to reign,
Poison thy firm allegiance. When thou seest him,
Bear him my blessing, and this last advice :
If Heaven restores him to his lawful crown,
Let him wreak no revenge upon his foes,
But think it his best conquest to forgive ;
With kindness let him treat success, so shall she be
A constant guest ; his promise, when once given,
Let no advantage break ; nor any view

Make himg, ye up his heavenly to reach it;
Let him maintain his power, but not increase it;
The string, prerogative, when strain'd too high,
Crack's like the tortur'd chord of harmony,
And spoils the concert between king and subject:
Let him regard his people more than ministers,
Whose interest or ambition may mislead him.
These rules observ'd, may make him a good prince,
And happier than his father——Wilt thou, James,
Remember this?

James. Oh, doubt not, royal sir!
Can what my father says escape my memory?
And at a time when he shall speak no more?

King. Come to my arms, my boy.

James. Would I could weep the blood that warms
my heart!

For water wrongs my sorrow.

King. My dear Elizabeth,
Draw near, and take thy dying father's blessing.
Say to thy mother (if thou e'er shalt see her),
That my thoughts never wander'd from her; that my
heart

Holds her as dear, even in this hour of death,
As when my eyes first languish'd on her beauties;
Tell her that Charles is only gone before
To intercept an immortal crown, and share it with her.
Farewell, Elizabeth! and let thy love
And thy obedience wait thy brother Charles.

Eliz. Alas, my father, I but now have found



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London. Printed for J. Bell, British Library, Strand, April 18. 1793.

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 T'inherit an immortal crown, and share it with her.
 Farewell, Elizabeth! and let thy love
 And thy obedience wait thy brother Charles.

Eliz. Alas, my father, I but now have found

A passage for my words, and yet you say,
Farewell, already!

King. Come, my little Glo'ster,
Come to my arms, and let me kiss thy cheek.

Glo'ster. Alas, my lord, 'tis cold and wet with tears!
I'll wipe it dry, and warm it with my hand,
That it may meet your kindness as it ought.

King. Glo'ster, when I am dead, your brother
Charles

Is then your king and master—— Love and obey him.
These men who shall cut off thy father's head,
When I am dead, perhaps, may make thee king;
But do not thou, I charge thee, on my blessing,
Accept the crown while thy two brothers live;
Consider, Glo'ster, they were born before thee,
And have an elder title—— Wilt thou, Glo'ster?

Glo'ster. A king! No, they shall tear me first in
pieces.

King. Oh, nature, nature, do not strike so deeply!
This scene is worse than death—— I am ready, sir.

[Tomlinson at the door.

James. Oh, sir!

Eliz. My lord!

Glo'ster. My father!

King. Oh!

Glo'ster. I cannot part from you, my dearest father.
Would not those bloody men that cut your head off,
If I should beg it, cut off mine?

King. Heart, thou art marble, not to break at this—

Yet I must go ; for dire necessity
Has struggled long with my paternal fondness,
And has at length prevail'd. Farewell, at once.

[*Going, returns.*

I thought I had taken my last leave of them ;
But find that nature calls me back again,
And asks another look, another parting kiss.

Be virtuous, and be happy. [*Embrace.*

Glo'ster. Oh, my poor father !—— [*They are led off.*

King. So, now 'tis over——Let thy friendly aid,
Good Juxon, bear me company to death——
Now, sir, lead on ; ere long I hope to see
A world more glorious ; where no discord lives,
Nor error rises, and no faction thrives :
There the unfettered mind perfection knows,
And looks with pity upon human woes. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter Duke of RICHMOND and Marquis of
LINDSEY.*

Rich. Oh, fatal day ! now horror is on foot
In her worst garb, and stern calamity
Can do no more to England : Charles's sun
Sets in his blood, and blushes for his people.

Lind. What awful majesty his visage bears,
Nor deigns the tribute of one sorrowing look,
To grace misfortune !

Rich. Look where Fairfax comes ;
His motion wild, and his distemper'd eye
Shoots fire around, and speaks some strange emotion.

Enter FAIRFAX.

Fair. Curs'd be the villain's arts, and every wile
That wrought me to believe him! Oh, credulity,
Thou hast as many ears as fame has tongues,
Open to every sound of truth and falsehood!
'Tis now too late, impossible to save him:
Fool that I was, I knew him for a villain,
Yet trusted to him, to the monster Cromwell.

Rich. Fairfax, the world acquits thee of the deed;
Thy power has labour'd strongly for his safety:
Behold where Juxon, the good bishop, comes,
Return'd from his last service to his master.

Fair. I will not stay to hear the sad relation,
But think on my revenge on Cromwell;
May the mercy which he deny'd to Charles's mortal
part
Ne'er light upon his soul, though at his last entreaty!

Enter JUXON.

Rich. Charles is at peace.

Juxon. He is, my gentle lord;
And may we all meet death with equal firmness!
Patience sat by him in an angel's garb,
And held out a full bowl of rich content,
Of which he largely quaff'd: then came charity,
And in behalf of Charles, with hasty hand,
Dealt round forgiveness to the world: his prayer
Was for his foes more earnest than himself,

Because their wants were greater. Thus fell Charles—
A monument of shame to the present age,
A warning to the future. His example
May prove this maxim's truth to all mankind :
The subject's reverence, and the prince's love,
Grasping and grasp'd, walk hand in hand together,
Strengthen'd by union : then the king's command
Is lost in the obedience of the subject :
The king, unask'd, confirms the people's rights,
And by the willing gift prevents the claim.
These are the virtues that endear a king,
Adorn a people, and true greatness bring.

[*Exeunt.*]

THE END.

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY A FRIEND.

*AT length our bard has told his dismal story—
He thinks—without offence to Whig or Tory.
He writes not from a spirit of contention ;
And only on third night expects—his pension.
Ladies, when civil dudgeon first grew high,
And the good folks fell out—they knew not why——
A stubborn race, no doubt on't, were those Round-heads,
Rebels at once to female power, and crown'd-heads :
But now, bless'd change ! our heroes give their votes
For government of kings, and petticoats.
Had we then liv'd—what crowds of volunteers !
Down with the Rump, and hey for Cavaliers !
In those prim times, our grandmothers of yore
Preferr'd a pray'r-book to a matadore :
At court, each turtle only lov'd her mate,
And no intrigues went on—but those of state.
What odious Salique law ('t was none of nature)
Excludes us women from the legislature ?
Could we assemble once in convocation,
How purely would we settle all the nation !*

Lovers and op'ras should employ our cares,
Cards, masquerades, and such-like state affairs:
Debates, like a male senate, we could handle;
And move, as well as they, to—snuff a candle:
Our eyes and noes with one shrill voice declare,
And none be mutes, but all, all speakers there.
Now, on our stage, while Charles once more is try'd,
He hopes none here can prove a regicide:
A milder sentence to receive, his trust is,
Tremendous pit, in your high court of justice.
If bravely you 'd support the good old cause,
Atone your fathers' crimes by your applause;
Lay not a barb'rous tax on your good-nature,
Nor raise in spleen the funds of wit, by satire.



